

**Minutes**  
**King County Rural Forest Commission**  
**August 14, 2002**  
**Preston Community Center**

*Commissioners present:* Gordon Bradley, Steve Ketz, Bill Kombol, Ken Konigsmark, Fred McCarty, Doug McClelland,

*Commissioners absent:* Jean Bouffard, Rudy Edwards, Louis Kahn, Matt Mattson, Andrew Schwarz, Dave Warren

*Exofficio members:* Mike Reed

*Staff:* Bill Loeber, Kristi McClelland, Jenna Tilt, Benj Wadsworth, Karen Wolf

*Guests:* Dennis Dart

Doug McClelland called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**Chair Report**

Doug McClelland introduced Karen Wolf from the Office of Regional Policy and Planning, who is working on siting a Secure Community Transition Facility, the state term for Transitional Sex Offender Housing that houses sex offenders who complete their sentence but are not ready to be released back to the community. They have been housed most recently at McNeil Island, but the courts recently determined that McNeil does not qualify as a transitional facility. The courts determined that the Counties where the offenders come from have to suggest a site for a facility by September 1, 2002. King County has to provide one facility for 15 offenders. Each jurisdiction has to choose a recommended site or face preemption by the state, which will then choose a site. The site cannot be within a given distance of various high-risk locations such as schools, libraries, etc. Executive Sims has decided that it is the responsibility of the County to choose a site, and he has recommended the Forest Production District because it is the only non-residential zone in unincorporated King County aside from a couple of industrial areas such as White Center that are interspersed with residential areas. The County is hoping that the state will choose a site in one of the cities.

The Executive proposal will go before the Growth Management Committee next week. The Committee will likely pass it out with no recommendation. There will be a public hearing at the full Council on Sep 23 with a decision on Sep 30. Council will either adopt the Exec recommendation, alter it, or decide to allow the state to preempt the County.

Doug commented that the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) does not have the right to condemn land. DSHS has approached WADNR about placing it on state land, but DNR is insisting that they have to treat trust land like private land and not assume that it is appropriate.

Doug asked the RFC two questions:

Can this facility fit in the FPD?

Are there ways to mitigate the impact that will make it acceptable?

Doug expressed concern that siting a facility like this will open the door for other institutional facilities in the FPD. He feels that DSHS should have to purchase several hundred acres in order to comply with the zoning in the FPD.

Fred McCarty commented that the problem was caused by the cities, so it is not fair for the solution to be placed in the rural area.

Karen commented that the facility will be intensively staffed. During the day, there is a one-to-one ratio. At night, there are two guards for every three residents. There is a security system around the facility. The offenders wear GPS bracelets so that their location can be tracked.

Bill Kombol commented that we are really talking about a retreat center, not unlike a corporate retreat center. The key is to put it on a large site so that in ten years when the rule changes the site can be used for a conference center.

Doug is concerned that siting a transitional housing facility in the FPD will lead to siting prisons in the FPD in the future. You can't let the state buy the land for \$2000/acre. The minimum lot size should be 80 acres.

Ken commented that the site should be co-located with an existing developed site in the FPD, where there is already infrastructure.

Karen commented that DSHS needs to be able to provide medical and public safety services, so the facility cannot be too far out in the forest.

Benj suggested that the County pick a specific spot in the FPD. The Exec considered that but decided against it because he felt it was too restrictive.

Steve Ketz commented that the state could mitigate by acquiring forestland elsewhere. Doug elaborated suggesting that the County determine the cost of 5 acres in an industrial zone and require the state to put that much money toward the acquisition of forestland in order to mitigate.

Karen commented that siting in the FPD will increase the cost of management for the state, which may detract from the desirability of a site in the FPD.

Bill Kombol suggested using a formula based on the number of people living in the facility. If on average 4 people living in a house would be required to purchase 80 acres, then 25 people should be required to purchase 480 acres (6 x 80 acres), develop five of it, and conserve the rest.

Doug emphasized the importance of requiring co-location. Gordon expressed concern that siting the facility in the FPD does not really meet the spirit of law – to provide a place for “community transition.”

Steve Ketz noted that the County is about to recommend development in the FPD, and he feels that this is inconsistent with past recommendations. Karen agreed and emphasized that the County is in a very difficult position.

Bill pointed out that Comp Plan policy RL-207 allows for developed uses in the FPD if they are compatible with continued forestry. He feels that this use is compatible.

Ken suggested that perhaps the Evergreen Forest would be interested – they need the money and the offenders could provide a work force.

Benj suggested that perhaps the County should consider siting the facility in a Rural Forest Focus Area. Although the RFFAs are zoned residential, there are large areas where there is still no residential development. There was general consensus that this would not be politically feasible.

Ken suggested that members should send individual letters to Council members. Doug made a motion to send a letter from the RFC to all Council members and the Executive. Benj will draft a letter and circulate it.

Doug introduced Mike Reed, new staff to the Natural Resource, Parks and Open Space committee of Council. He is an ex-officio member of the Commission.

Motion: 1-802: To adopt the May 8, 2002 minutes as written. Moved, seconded and approved.

#### **Staff report:**

Benj gave an update on the Conservation Futures funding allocation. The Citizen Oversight Committee allocated \$100,000 to the parcels on Mitchell Hill. Some of this will go toward an appraisal of the property. There is a need for discussion on where to come up with the rest of the funding.

The COC also allocated \$250,000 to Section 33 in the Rock Creek Valley to Sugarloaf Mountain adjacent to the west. The section has been segregated into 20-acre parcels by Plum Creek. It has a BPA powerline running through it. Also, the COC allocated \$300,000 to Bill Kombol's property on Icy Creek, which could also be managed for forestry. These are the only three parcels that would be managed for forestry.

Doug commented that the King County Department of Transportation has allocated \$400,000 for acquisitions of forested parcels along the Stossel county road. The five parcels, two with residences on them, are inholdings in the WADNR Markworth Forest. KCDOT has determined that the road is not worth maintaining and they are better off buying out the landowners. The RFC should be thinking about other funding sources for this project.

The RFC sent a letter to the Executive Office supporting the American Farmland Trust project discussed at the May meeting. At this point, American Farmland Trust is still seeking funding to do the project. It is on hold until funding is acquired.

Benj showed the Commission the new table-top display that was put together for the King County Fair. The forestry program intends to display it at the Issaquah Salmon Days festival. They are also working on a brochure that will contain much of the same information and complement the display. Doug asked if it could be changed at all. It can be. Kristi suggested laminating the panels for outdoor use.

Steve suggested changing the heading to clarify that King County does not own all of the forestland in King County – perhaps changing the wording to “Forests in King County.” Ken asked if the RFC could see a draft of the brochure before it is completed. Benj will bring it to the September meeting.

The plan for the September meeting is to do a field trip to the Snoqualmie Tree Farm. Benj drafted an invitation to Council members inviting them to join the RFC in the field and/or go on a flight sometime in September. Doug will send it next week once the Council is back from recess.

Ken suggested inviting key staff as well. Mike Reed commented that Council is getting into budget season, so it would be best to do it as soon as possible.

Doug suggested that it is important for commissioners to join the field trip even if Council members cannot come. The agenda will be determined once we know if there will be guests attending. Doug would like to discuss how the Evergreen Forest project might impact the RFC's focus in other parts of the County. Ken suggested inviting Mark Sollito, Stephanie Warden, and staff to the Growth Management Committee. Doug suggested extending the meeting from 9:00 – 1:00. Steve suggested inviting Charlie Raines and/or Gene Duvernoy. Mike Reed commented that most of the Council

members have heard a presentation about the Evergreen Forest. The focus of the field trip should not be to rehash the EFT, but rather to talk about next steps.

### **Programmatic Plan for Management of King County Forestlands**

Jenna Tilt introduced the programmatic plan for Management of King County Forestlands.

Mike Reed questioned that the section on acquisitions does not seem relevant to the rest of the document.

Steve Ketz commented that it needs to be clearer that the document refers to lands that the County owns, not all forestlands in King County. He also suggested the need to eliminate vagueness. As an example, there is a reference on page two to sustaining and enhancing “environmental benefits,” but it is not clear what these are. He commented that the County’s obligation is to follow the law, and the document should not try to go beyond that requirement without making a conscious choice to do so and accepting the costs. He commented that requiring minimum rotation ages of 120 years is not realistic from an economic standpoint. Doug elaborated that the County should not pin itself down on issues such as rotation ages, etc. Rather, staff should follow the Forest and Fish Rules and then they can choose to go beyond the rules if they want.

Doug feels that there is a faction of County staff that does not understand forestry, so it is important that this document not be too restrictive at the outset. Kristi commented that there is a desire among some to rename forest properties “Forest Preserves” rather than Forest Resource properties. Doug feels that the RFC needs to play an important role in the development of this document. He suggested that the RFC should write an e-mail to DNR management emphasizing that forestry needs to be an important part of the management of these lands and that the County must continue to involve the RFC in the decision making process. Ken will draft an e-mail and circulate it to the rest of the Commission.

Dennis Dart commented that “sustainable timber production” needs to be clarified. He suggested that it seems that the County might pursue certification, and he feels that this would be a good avenue for specifying what is meant by “sustainable.” He also commented that the statement that “Harvesting of timber should occur only when returns will exceed costs” might prevent doing timber stand improvement projects. He feels that this statement could prevent the County from accomplishing numerous goals on a single permit and thus saving money.

Benj commented that while it is important that the County not tie its own hands, staff also does not want a document that is nothing but fluff. This is the time to make decisions as to what the management priorities are.

Dennis suggested that certification is a must for the County as it will help make these decisions. He suggested looking at the Arcata (California) City Forest as an example. Harvest of redwoods and Douglas Fir contributes to the parks department budget and subsidizes passive recreation.

### **Forest Workshop Summary**

Doug commented that the workshop was a rousing success. There was a great turnout, and as a result, there are efforts in Kitsap, Jefferson and Clallam counties to model King County initiatives to conserve forestland. Many of the key landowners from these counties were there and learned a great deal about potential collaborative efforts.

Benj summarized the next steps that came out of each of the breakout groups. There has not been much follow-up on any of the efforts, most likely because it has been summer time. Benj is working on pulling together a meeting of all the groups that are involved in acquisitions of forestland in King County. He questioned who could appropriately take the lead on this effort. Doug commented that land acquisition meetings are underway in other counties.

In the outreach group, DeeAnn Johnigk at WADNR was going to initiate a follow-up meeting of that group. Doug suggested contacting her to check on the status of that effort. He also commented that Todd Myers, PR person for Commissioner Sutherland had suggested that Doug Sutherland and Ron Sims write a joint op-ed about the issue. Doug will follow up with Todd.

Ken commented that he had done an acquisition meeting for the Greenway, and while people were uncomfortable with putting their cards on the table, the outcomes were very good. Ken suggested that perhaps we could do a meeting for the whole county in lieu of the next Greenway acquisitions meeting.

Fred McCarty commented that it might be the RFC's role to follow up on many of the recommendations coming out of the workshop. He feels that there is a need for an action plan and there needs to be one group that coordinates it. There needs to be a vision statement that everyone buys into. Ken elaborated that there is a need for a leader to pull the groups together, and that could be a full-time job, which is not going to happen.

Benj summarized that he will convene a meeting to discuss forest acquisitions in King County. He and Doug will contact a couple of the key players beforehand. Doug will contact the WADNR person about convening the outreach group. He will also contact Todd Myers about the joint op-ed.

### **Monitoring Program**

Doug asked how the monitoring information should be presented and who the target audience is?

Fred commented that there needs to be a link to the Cedar River Basin Plan.

Steve Ketz questioned whether it is the County's role to monitor private landowners. Benj responded that given the mission of the Forestry Program, to work with private landowners to maintain forests and forestry, it is the County's role. Steve suggested that the outline for the monitoring report recommends a great deal of work, and he wonders if it is worth it.

Bill Kombol commented that the report should not include editorial comment, but rather should provide the data for others to interpret.

Gordon commented that the purpose for monitoring needs to be explicit.

Ken suggested that the data really needs to be available every 4 years for the Comp Plan update, so 4 years might be a good interval for some of the efforts.

Jenna suggested a need for monitoring of the County-owned forestlands.

### **Next meeting**

Doug suggested that perhaps the RFC should meet bi-monthly or perhaps take a couple months off. It was agreed to continue with monthly meetings but skip December and July.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 12 – field trip to Snoqualmie Tree Farm – details to follow.